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A Message to his Missionary Friends

R. E. S.

1867-1947

"Jesus Christ our hope"



"ROCKLEDGE"

LAKEVILLE, CONNECTICUT

WHEN he was a lad at school in Andover, Robert Speer, like other thoughtful boys, was confronted by the eternal question: "Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? Who, and What is behind it all, and what is its meaning, this tangled, puzzling business of human life?" With a clear head, and the firm discipline of legal training, he studied the evidence, in nature, which he dearly loved, in history, where tragedy is so evident, and in the church and the Bible.

Before he went to college he had read the Bible through with great care, and in the Gospels he found the answer to his questions. He saw that God is real, the eternal, ever-present and all powerful Creator, and he saw that God, in His power, His majesty, His glory, and His perfect selfless love had entered the human scene at a definite point in time and space, had in truth been born of a virgin, thus lifting all womanhood from the level of a segment of the race, to a place of highest privilege and responsibility: that in this human scene He had lived the life of a boy and man among men, as a member of a people prepared through centuries for His coming, and enduring now the limitations of a subject people. In this setting, and working as a carpenter and teacher, He met the full brunt of evil and sin, and died at the hands of men blind with hatred of His holiness. But He rose again from death to become in fullest truth the Redeemer of the world, very God of very God, conqueror of sin, disease, hatred and death, ever present among us as the eternal, ineffable, wholly real Spirit of all light and life and love, and always far more ready to help us than we are to receive His help. From this conviction he never faltered, though his apprehension of it grew ever greater and deeper, transforming him, as Paul was transformed, "in the inward man."

In this truth, central, cosmic and eternal, he saw the answer to all questions and all needs, and to share this truth with all men everywhere became for him henceforth, the one business of life. This was "the pearl of great price," and honor, preferment, wealth and power, were not even temptations as compared with it.

The Bible, so easy to neglect and so often misunderstood, held this truth. The church, even with all its human imperfections, was its channel, and so the Student Volunteer Movement and the Board of Foreign Missions became the natural steps to his life-work.

Prayer, of which he seldom spoke, was as natural to him as breathing, Bible study as necessary to him as his daily food, and "the practice of the Presence of God" was the very essence of his life.

Like the Scottish philosopher, Hogg, of Madras, he understood that "God only waits on our obedience to release His omnipotence in the service of His love," so his one purpose was to bring every thought into captivity to Christ. His reading all centered on this, and for his own satisfaction he had collected out of his note-books, the little *Five Minutes* that goes to you with this message. He knew the cost to you of your high calling, the perils, the loneliness, the frictions, the separations, the anxieties, the disciplines, but he knew, too, that the wealth of God is greater by far than all our human need. He never began or ended the day without kneeling in prayer that we "might be—all of us—filled unto all the fulness of God."

With this hope and faith the little book goes to you. May the Spirit whom he so loved and trusted make us "always abounding in the life and joy of our Lord."

Yours in sincerest faith and gratitude,

September 10, 1948

Emma Bailey Speer